



DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling

For Your Information...

Recycling 201

OK, listen up. In Recycling 101, you learned what recycling is, why we should recycle and how recycling works. In Recycling 201, you will learn how recycling rates are measured in South Carolina and how well we're doing.

Sounds easy, right? Well, nothing is easy. Not even measuring or reporting the recycling rate.

Two things. First, there are all kinds of waste. Second, no matter how many kinds of waste there are, there is a total amount of waste generated.

The state measures many different kinds of waste, but the recycling rate is measured **only** from the total amount of municipal solid waste (MSW) generated. What is MSW? It's the combined residential, commercial and institutional waste generated that includes but is not limited to paper, cans, bottles, food scraps, yard waste and packaging. It does not include, for example, any industrial waste. This is important to note. Why? Well, some experts say industry accounts for about 40 percent of the total waste generated.

What is South Carolina's current recycling rate?

The amount of MSW generated in fiscal year (FY) 2002 (July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002) was 4.39 million tons, according to the S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report for FY 2002. Of this amount, 1.26 million tons, or 28.7 percent, were recycled. The rate reflects a slight drop from the previous FY. In FY 2001, the state's recycling rate was 28.9 percent (see Recycling Rates table on reverse page).

How do we compare nationally? The amount of MSW generated in calendar year 2000 (the latest numbers available) nationwide was 231.9 million tons,

according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). Of this amount, 69.9 million tons, or about 30.1 percent, were recycled.

Where do the "numbers" come from to determine the state's recycling rate?

The S.C. Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 (Act) requires that county governments report the amount of MSW recycled to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). The counties began reporting in FY 1993. DHEC also receives reports from MSW landfills and incinerators.

What are South Carolina's recycling and waste reduction goals?

The Act originally set a recycling goal of 25 percent and a goal of reducing the amount of waste being disposed of at MSW landfills and incinerators of 30 percent. Both rates are calculated by weight. Both are measured from the total amount of waste generated. Both are measured from a baseline of FY 1993 and were to be met by FY 1997.

In October 2000, the Act was amended with a goal of recycling 35 percent of the MSW stream and a goal to reduce MSW generation for disposal to 3.5 pounds per person per day by 2005. By comparison, the U.S. EPA's goals for the nation are to recycle 35 percent of the MSW generated by 2005 and to reduce MSW generation for disposal to 4.3 pounds per person per day, also by 2005.

How are we doing? In FY 2002, South Carolinians generated for disposal 4.2 pounds per person per day.



How does our waste reduction numbers compare to national efforts? According to the 2000 figures compiled by the U.S. EPA, Americans generated for disposal 4.5 pounds of MSW per person per day.

Banned Items

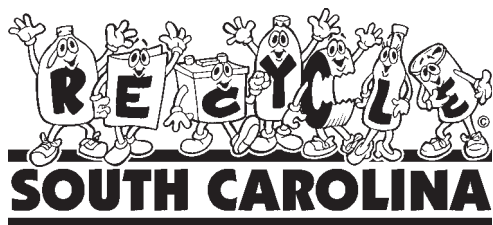
Several items are not allowed to be disposed of in MSW landfills and must be recycled according to the Act. The items are appliances (white goods), lead-acid batteries (car and truck batteries), tires, motor oil and yard waste. Land-clearing debris is also prohibited from MSW landfills and must be disposed of in a land-clearing debris landfill or composted.

Used Oil Recycling

Used oil is not part of MSW and, as such, used oil recycling is measured separately. No matter how it is measured, South Carolina has one of the nation's top used oil recycling programs targeted at do-it-yourself (DIYers) oil changers. In (calendar year) 2002, DIYers recycled 1,160,865 gallons of used oil, the 12th consecutive year a record amount was collected. DIYers have recycled more than 9 million gallons of used oil since 1990. In addition, (calendar year 2002) DIYers recycled 210 tons of used oil filters and more than 92 tons of used oil bottles.

A Snapshot of South Carolina

According to the annual report, more than 564,000 households received curbside collection of MSW and recyclables through about 175 curbside programs throughout the state. Drop-off sites served about 1.3 million households. South Carolina has 18 permitted MSW landfills. In addition, there are more than 700 used oil collection location for DIYers.



What was recycled in South Carolina?

FY 2002 (MSW only)

Glass	9,848 tons
Metal	333,073 tons
Paper/Paperboard	438,804 tons
Plastic	25,588 tons
Lead-acid batteries	10,512 tons
Waste tires	43,836 tons
Appliances	39,745 tons
Yard waste/Land-clearing debris	250,822 tons
Miscellaneous	110,103 tons
TOTAL	1,262,331 tons

SOURCE: S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report for FY 2002

South Carolina's Recycling Rate

(calculated by weight - MSW only)

FY 1998	31.8 percent
FY 1999	31.2 percent
FY 2000	31.4 percent
FY 2001	28.9 percent
FY 2002	28.7 percent

SOURCE: S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report for FY 2002

South Carolina's Recycling Totals

(measured in tons - MSW only)

FY 1998	1,314,825
FY 1999	1,171,268
FY 2000	1,408,591
FY 2001	1,262,165
FY 2002	1,262,331

SOURCE: S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report for FY 2002

South Carolina's Total MSW Generated

(measured in tons)

FY 1998	4,132,982
FY 1999	3,751,576
FY 2000	4,482,524
FY 2001	4,357,733
FY 2002	4,392,335

SOURCE: S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report for FY 2002



Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling

1-800-768-7348

www.scdhec.gov/recycle

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